

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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August 7, 1973

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President  
Richard Helms, US Ambassador to Iran  
Harold H. Saunders, NSC Staff

DATE AND PLACE:

Friday, August 3, 1973 at 4:30 p.m. in Dr. Kissinger's Office

Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Helms had spent ten minutes or so in private conversation before Mr. Saunders joined them and began taking notes.

Helms:

Well, Henry, I don't think I have too much business that remains to be done.

Kissinger:

When are you going back?

Helms:

I will be back in Tehran on August 15. I will be at the shore this weekend, then in New York seeing my mother. I will stop over for a couple of days in London where <sup>25X1</sup> will be available through the embassy.

DOS Review Completed.

I think we have the Kurdish problem on circuit.

They are doing an assessment of whether the Kurds have enough arms. <sup>25X1</sup> Depending on that assessment, then the issue will be whether there should be any more hardware or whether the issue is simply providing or not providing additional economic aid.

Kissinger:

What do you think they should have?

Helms:

I will not know until I have this assessment. Perhaps Saunders could telegraph it to me so that I can give you my views.

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- 2 -

Kissinger: I have thought about your message from Arafat. We have a nothing message to send back to him. It doesn't say anything. As long as he hears from us, that is something.

Helms: I will [ ] to keep the channel open and to say that if they have anything to tell us, he will be available.

Kissinger: We have a few paragraphs here which you could [ ] pass on. They don't really say anything. [Me25X1 attached.]

Helms: [After reading] The last paragraph is all that really is needed.

Kissinger: My experience with these channels is that all one really needs to do is to keep them open and to see what the other side puts into them.

Helms: I will keep this piece of paper to myself. It is too formal to give them a paper. I will [ ] pass on the substance orally.

25X1

Kissinger: From whom will you say this is a response?

Helms: The US government. I think it is desirable to keep this as general as possible. They should know that they will just clog up the system if they press for too precise an answer. They are beggars, not choosers in this situation.

Kissinger: I will see Ambassador Zahedi and give him some language to use in his briefing for Ismail.

Saunders:

25X1

Kissinger:

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- 3 -

Helms: There is divided opinion on that. On some issues he is pretty good, but on others he gets quite emotional and is not effective. In short, he is not effective. In short, he is not a known or predictable quantity.

Kissinger: What issues has he handled well?

Helms: He did the Bahrain negotiations very well, but he gets emotional on some things and then isn't worth very much.

Kissinger: The President is still smarting from Zahedi's having invited McGovern to his dinner for the Shah and the President. Whoever made out that guest list?

Saunders: Zahedi made it up.

Helms: If I were making up the guest list, they are not the people I would have chosen to put on a list for a social evening with the President. But as it turned out, I think it worked quite favorably for the President.

Kissinger: I do too, but that is not the view elsewhere in this building. I don't mind seeing these people. I see them all the time socially. Kay Graham called me and asked my advice. I urged her not to accept the invitation and she was very good about it. I don't know what the President would have done if she had been there. He might have left. That would really have ripped it. I don't know how relations with the Post could get any worse, but that would not have helped.

I asked the Israelis whether they would consider retro-fitting the Jordanian tank. They promised to consider it. The retro-fitting and the C-130 are both money problems for us.

Helms: I don't really have any view on these Jordanian issues. But please just keep me informed so I can tell the Shah where this issue stands.

Kissinger: Why don't we ask Rifai whether he would rather have a C-130 than some other items in his military assistance program?

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- 4 -

Some people keep raising the question of a mission to Saudi Arabia. That mad man Clements wants to go out to Saudi Arabia on a mission.

Helms: I got an ear full yesterday when I saw him yesterday about the undesirability of having any contingency plans that involve Iranian involvement in Saudi Arabia if there is trouble there.

Kissinger: We had [ ] meeting on this subject. I just raised the issue of what we would do if we woke up some morning and found a radical government in Saudi Arabia. Clements made an impassioned plea that Iran must never become involved in Saudi Arabia. He sees the answer as a mission to Saudi Arabia on which he serves. His solution is to pour arms into Saudi Arabia and then to squeeze Israel for a solution to the Arab-Israeli problem.

25X1

The way I see it is that any settlement Israel is likely to buy will be unfavorable to the Arabs. Therefore, we should get the radicals to sign it. If the Saudis are involved and have to sign it, if the Saudis yield to Israel, that could shake the monarchy. My strategy is to keep them uninvolved.

Helms: Clements should not go to Saudi Arabia. He has too many business interests out there. I understand that an economic mission under Casey might go to Saudi Arabia. That would be a good idea.

Kissinger: I am trying to get Simon to go.

Helms: That's not a very good idea. We shouldn't be sending him out if he is Jewish. Casey is an intelligent man and he could do a good job.

Kissinger: Is Simon Jewish? I hadn't thought of that.

Saunders: One alternative is to invite Prince Fahd to come here. I have sent you a memo recommending that.

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- 5 -

Kissinger: Where is the memo? That is a good idea. I would approve having Fahd come here.

Saunders: Does that mean I should go ahead with the recommendation in my memo? I sent the memo over earlier in the week.

Kissinger: Let me look at the memo. I will approve it tomorrow morning. What do you think of having Fahd over here?

Helms: I think it's a fine idea. My view has been that we have not done enough for the Saudis. Do I understand that we now have asked for agreement on Jim Akins as ambassador?

Kissinger: Yes, I removed the hold on him. Do you think this is a good idea?

Helms: Yes, it will be all right. Akins has been heavily involved in oil. But he is a big enough man to put that in the background and to show that he can deal with other issues.

Kissinger: Whom do you think would be a good ambassador?

Helms: As I said before, I just think you need someone who has "RN" stamped on his forehead.

Kissinger: We can build him up when he gets out there.

Helms: Akins is a bright fellow.

Is there anything that came up in the President's conversation with the Shah that I should know that I would not normally deduce?

Kissinger: I will show you the notes before you go.

At this point Dr. Kissinger was called out by General Haig. After several minutes he returned and agreed with Ambassador Helms that Helms would follow up on the contingency planning which the Shah promised to do on Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Mr. Saunders left, and Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Helms continued their conversation.

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71.8.  
Harold H. Saunders